



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

March 2, 2005

**MAN ACCUSED OF USING POSITION AT SAUDI EMBASSY TO SMUGGLE
EGYPTIANS INTO THE U.S. MAKES INITIAL COURT APPEARANCE**
-- Suspect Allegedly Charged \$3,000-\$5,000 to Provide False Saudi Diplomatic Visas to Illegal Aliens --

ALEXANDRIA, VA. – An Egyptian national made his initial appearance in federal court today in Alexandria after being arrested last month for using his position as a driver at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington, D.C. to secure fraudulent Saudi diplomatic visas to help aliens enter the United States illegally.

Mohamed Abdel Wahab Yakoub, a.k.a. Mohamed Wardi, a 61-year-old native of Egypt and a resident of Maryland, today appeared in federal court in the Eastern District of Virginia on charges of charges of smuggling aliens into the United States in violation of Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324 (a)(1)(A)(iv). Yakoub, who was fired by the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in late 2002, was released pending further legal proceedings after today's initial court appearance.

Special agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) first arrested Yakoub at Dulles International Airport on February 14, 2005, upon his arrival on a flight from Cairo, Egypt. ICE agents in Washington have been investigating Yakoub and his alleged human smuggling scheme for more than a year. At this time, ICE has no information indicating that any of those illegal aliens who entered the United States via this alleged smuggling scheme had any terrorist ties.

"This was a unique and troubling smuggling scheme from our perspective," said Allan Doody, ICE Special Agent-in-Charge for Washington, D.C. "Anytime you have an individual exploiting his post at an Embassy to smuggle people into this country, it raises serious homeland security concerns. Thankfully, we have closed down this human pipeline."

According to the ICE affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint, Yakoub was known to individuals in Egypt as an employee of the Saudi Embassy who had the ability to secure fraudulent Saudi diplomatic visas to help Egyptian aliens get into the United States.

The ICE affidavit alleges that Yakoub wrote letters on Saudi Embassy letterhead falsely stating that a Saudi diplomat was requesting an A-3 visa for Egyptians to work for the Saudi diplomat in the United States. These fraudulent letters, complete with Saudi government stamps, were then sent to the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt to help Egyptian aliens receive U.S. visas for entry into this country, the ICE affidavit alleges.

On several occasions, the U.S. Embassy in Egypt approved the visa applications, believing that these Egyptians would be working for Saudi diplomats in the United States. According to the ICE affidavit, the Egyptian aliens eventually used the fraudulent visas to enter the United States illegally and none of them ever worked for any diplomat or any other employee of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia after arrival in this country.

The ICE affidavit alleges that Yakoub charged each Egyptian alien between \$3,000 and \$5,000 for securing the false Saudi diplomatic visas allowing them to enter the United States.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.